

WASHINGTON (October 7) - Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) said the Helen Keller statue formally unveiled in the U.S. Capitol today will stand as an inspiring symbol of hope and determination for all Americans.

Bachus attended a dedication ceremony in the historic Capitol Rotunda honoring the Alabama native who overcame the loss of her sight and hearing at an early age to become a world-renowned educator and advocate for the disabled. He later presented a framed copy of House remarks on the official acceptance of the statue to Dr. Bob Morris of the Helen Keller Foundation.

Congressman Bachus said, "This gift to the American people from Alabama is a tribute to the remarkable life and continuing legacy of Helen Keller. As an educator, an advocate, and humanitarian, she showed that any obstacle can be overcome through faith and determination. The statue will be especially popular with children, who need to know the story of how a young girl overcame physical limitations to become one of most honored and cherished citizens."

The 600-pound bronze statue depicts Keller as a seven year old standing next to a water pump at the moment she first understood how to communicate through words. It shows the moment made famous in the movie "The Miracle Worker" when, with water running over her hands, the young girl made the connection with words taught to her by Anne Sullivan.

Alabama Governor Bob Riley and the President of the American Foundation for the Blind, Carl Augusto, delivered keynote remarks at the ceremony along with members of the House and Senate leadership. Students from the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind in Talladega sang a musical selection of patriotic songs.

Helen Keller was born in Tuscumbia in 1880. Although an illness left her blind and deaf before her second birthday, she went on to become a worldwide advocate for the disabled and social causes and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

The statue by artist Edward Hlvaka, the first to portray a child and an individual with disabilities, will be displayed in the Rotunda before being moved to a permanent site in the new Capitol

Visitors Center.